

DASP Digest



US Forest Service International Programs
Disaster Assistance Support Program

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Highlights

Revised RMT Policy
finalized.

FY 2006 DASP Program
Overview.

DASP Digest is a quarterly report produced by the Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP), a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service International Programs and USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. For more information please visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/global/.



RMT Policy Finalized

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*RMT Policy and Procedures
address lessons learned, clarify
roles and responsibilities, and
align with OFDA's business
operations.*

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has developed a Washington-based response management system to complement and support OFDA's existing Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) structure. The Response Management Team (RMT) was first conceived in FY 2001. In the ensuing years, OFDA's systems and procedures have evolved, necessitating a system update and revision. The Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP) was tasked to undertake this update, which was finalized in December 2006.

The new RMT Policy and Procedures seek to:

- Incorporate lessons learned;

- Clarify the relationship between the RMT and DART; and
- Harmonize the RMT system with OFDA's day-to-day approach to business operations.

A primary change to the Policy is the restructuring of the RMT's functional sections and supporting organizational units. Notably, the RMT will now include a Deputy Manager for Planning and a Deputy Manager for Operations. Other significant updates include:

- Designation of a Response Director (RD) who will manage the DART and RMT;
- Response guidelines that apply to both DARTs and RMTs;
- Guidelines on activation; and
- Revised or new operating procedures for all functions.

What do you need to know?

DASP encourages all OFDA staff, both veteran and new, to review the RMT Policy in its entirety to fully understand the scope of policy and organizational changes. For

those staff members who may serve on an on-call RMT, DASP encourages you to review the procedures associated with the position(s) that you are most likely to fill. DASP plans to conduct briefings for OFDA staff and partners in the spring of 2007.

Where can you find it?

The RMT Policy and Procedures can be found at p:/OPS/Division/Field Support Team/References/RMT Manual. The document is also available in eRooms in the MAIN folder, under the heading "Reports."

Future updates

The RMT Procedures will be updated frequently based on day-to-day lessons learned during RMT activations. Future After Action workshops may also yield recommendations that will be used to update procedures. OFDA's goal is to ensure that the RMT Procedures remain up-to-date and accurate as a vital reference for teams.

If you note errors or omissions, or have an idea that may improve procedures, please contact Stephanie Savolaine at 202-712-0004 or one of the DASP staff.





OFDA staff member Skylar Sherman refers to his FOG during an aerial assessment.

New FOG Distribution Policy

Every year OFDA receives dozens of requests for FOGs from a wide spectrum of people and organizations. During the quarter, members of DASP worked closely with OFDA's Field Support Team (FST) to develop and finalize a distribution policy for FOGs. The policy helps the DASP to make consistent decisions about the distribution of FOGs from OFDA's stockpiles based on clear priorities determined by OFDA's Senior Management Team (SMT).

Guiding principles of the policy include:

- FOGs are meant to be used as field guides in humanitarian response operations, as opposed to tokens or gifts; and
- FOGs are available for purchase by the general public from the GPO, and a free "pdf" version is available online from the USAID website.

The policy stipulates that OFDA's Operations Liaison Unit and the Office of the Director will each receive 120 FOGs every year to meet their unique representational requirements. OFDA also plans to provide FOGs for all new OFDA staff, and all participants in *DART/RMT Essentials* courses and *Joint Humanitarian Operations Command (JHOC)* courses. Other requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet defined needs.

Getting Physical: Exercises Test IAS

DASP staff member Laura Chapman has been helping the Field Support Team (FST) coordinate the development of the International Assistance System Concept of Operations (IAS CONOPS). The IAS details how the US will receive and request international assistance during a domestic disaster coordinated under the National Response Plan. Over the last few months, the DASP and FST participated in exercises designed to test and operationalize the IAS CONOPS.

Tabletop Exercise: OFDA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed a tabletop exercise to test the IAS CONOPS, identify gaps in the system, and clarify or revise procedures. Held on November 20, the exercise was attended by 36 representatives from over 10 Federal Departments and Agencies including USAID,

FEMA, the Department of State, Department of Defense, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Transportation Safety Administration.

The scenario was a massive earthquake in Portland, Oregon. Participants were broken into small groups and represented their agency in performing a number of tasks using the IAS CONOPS guidance. The exercise generated discussions that helped clarify agency roles and responsibilities, and lessons learned were used to make some minor modifications in the system.

USAR Exercise: Following a massive earthquake, FEMA may request international USAR assistance during the initial stages of a domestic response. Such assistance must be deployed rapidly.

The CBP and regulatory agencies such as FDA and USDA are critical in expediting the entry of international USAR team personnel and equipment.

To help these agencies understand the types and quantity of equipment and supplies that international USAR teams require, OFDA invited agency representatives to observe an exercise conducted by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, one of OFDA's partners. The exercise simulated the deployment of the Fairfax USAR team to England in response to a terrorist attack, and was used to classify Fairfax as a "heavy team" under INSARAG guidelines.

Interagency observers were thankful for the opportunity to study the customs clearance process and identify commodities requiring domestic agency oversight.

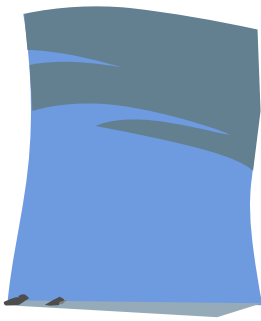
DART/RMT Essentials: Focus on RMT Changes



*Excellent course. It gives
me a good perspective of*

OFDA Training Readies L.A. Team

Africa DOCs Learn OFDA Basics



Whoever wants to reach a distant goal must take small steps.

~ Saul Bellow

Attention to Detailers: Recent Assignments

- Barry Gall (9/6 – 10/13) served his second detail of the calendar year in the Logistics Unit as a Logistics Specialist.
- Tom Frey (11/13 – 11/17) regularly assists the Operations Liaison Unit as an instructor for the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course. Tom traveled to Fort Bragg for this latest installment.
- Bill Johnson (12/4 – 12/13) also served his second detail of the calendar year (he previously served as a DOS for ECA) providing assistance to DASP Mission Disaster Preparedness portfolio. Bill helped prepare for and made updates to upcoming trainings conducted by the DASP.
- Helene Cleveland (12/11 – 1/12) covered the DASP Detailer Program. Helene completed a major update to the Detailer Program Standard Operating Procedures, revised multiple documents including the job hazard analyses for assignments in Washington and overseas, and wrote a guidance manual for the detailer database.

Looking Back: FY 2006 Program in Review

Although there were fewer major international disasters compared with FY 2005, FY 2006 still was a busy and productive year for the DASP. Successful teamwork within the DASP and with our OFDA and interagency partners allowed us to achieve a number of long-term goals.

Chief among these, DASP completed and delivered long-awaited updates of the *Field Operating Guide (FOG) for Disaster Assessment and Response* and the DART Tools CD. DASP also initiated a significant revision to the Response Management Team Policy and Procedures.

DASP conducted six after action reviews for disaster responses in Sahelian West Africa, Latin America & Caribbean, the Southern United States (Hurricane Katrina), Ethiopia, South Asia, and Sudan/Darfur.

Working with the Field Support Team, DASP staff completed a concept of operations for interagency collaboration in receiving and requesting foreign assistance during a domestic disaster response.

DASP worked with Regional Advisors to plan and deliver a successful Mission Disaster Preparedness workshop for 17 countries in West Africa. At least six other countries received related technical assistance and support.

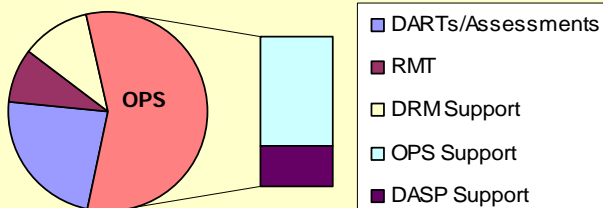
DASP staff designed new materials and provided DART/RMT Training to roughly 300 OFDA staff members and partners, including members of USAID/DCHA senior

management and Development Outreach and Communications (DOC) Officers worldwide. DASP contributed to other trainings including CPR/First Aid, Safety Security Officer (SSO) Orientation, and the USAID Food Aid Managers (FAM) course.

In support of these and other activities, DASP accessed Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management employees for 33 assignments. Nearly one quarter of these assignments supported field and DC-based teams responding to the Pakistan earthquake, drought in Ethiopia, and Sudan/Darfur complex emergency. In total, DASP detailers contributed 885 days of work (3.4 work years) supporting OFDA responses to international disasters.

A forthcoming annual report will detail these and other FY 2006 accomplishments.

DASP Detailer Days - FY 2006



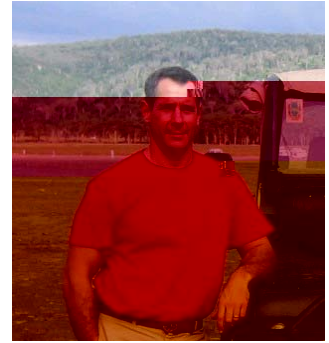
MDRP a Critical Tool for Bulgaria MDRO

In November, the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria pilot tested the State Department's Crisis and Emergency Planning Application. This web-based tool updates Embassy Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) by guiding a Post's Emergency Action Committee (EAC) through the planning process. The DASP and OFDA's Regional Team for Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia (EMCA) worked with Mission Disaster Relief Officer (MDRO) Bill Cherry to provide feedback as he updated Annex J of the EAP. This

section of the EAP, which is entitled *Assistance to Host Country in a Major Accident or Disaster*, is also known as the Mission Disaster Relief Plan (MDRP).

Bill, who is USAID/Bulgaria's Executive Officer, concluded that, "... maintaining a **regularly updated** MDRP serves as a critical *go to tool* when faced with a disaster. When disaster strikes, there are so many things that we have to react to that are

unanticipated, so we don't need to make things more difficult by not having a plan in place that takes care of things we can anticipate. Just as important as having a plan in place, is having a system in place that reminds the MDRO and/or the EAC to insure that the MDRP is updated regularly. Too many times a wonderful plan doesn't serve the Post, when after the years have gone by, no one has updated the plan, knows where it is or who is supposed to be in charge of maintaining it."



A regularly updated MDRP serves as a critical go to tool when faced with a disaster.

~ USAID/Bulgaria MDRO Bill Cherry

Making MDRO Connections in S. America

In close collaboration with OFDA's Regional Advisors in San Jose, Costa Rica, DASP Mission Preparedness Coordinator Chris Leonardo planned and implemented the second Regional Mission Disaster Preparedness Consultation in Quito, Ecuador (November 7 - 9, 2006).

Fourteen MDROs representing seven countries in South America attended. The MDRO is appointed by the Chief of Mission and is the focal point at post for disaster-related information, planning, and activities affecting the host country. The MDRO prepares and updates the Embassy's MDRP and ensures that members of the Embassy's EAC are familiar with its guidance on emergency operations. The MDRO also maintains relationships with host-country emergency responders and government ministries, as well as NGOs and U.N. agencies in

the country.

The objectives of the training were to familiarize MDROs with USG disaster response options, the resources and capacities of OFDA, and the appropriate procedures for accessing these resources; to orient MDROs to the guidelines for developing the MDRP; and finally, to provide MDROs with the knowledge and tools to successfully respond to an emergency.

As with previous regional workshops, MDROs were given a chance to apply what they learned by preparing a draft MDRP, identifying country-specific hazards and vulnerabilities, exploring potential disaster relief partners, and discussing local capacities. Participant evaluations noted that all felt better prepared to respond to a crisis at post after completing the consultation.

Highlights from the consultation

included a presentation from OFDA Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan on *Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Disaster Response*. Regional Advisor Sidney Velado facilitated a session on vulnerabilities which included a discussion of El Niño conditions.

Tim and Sidney received special recognition during the consultation from the USAID Mission Director in Quito for their outstanding efforts in response to the 2006 volcanic eruptions in Ecuador.

Fourteen MDROs representing seven South American countries attended the regional MDRO consultation in Ecuador.



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Around the World: Reaching out to MDROs

During the quarter, DASP and the EMCA team worked closely with the MDRO in Serbia and the USAID Desk Officer on an initial draft of the Mission's MDRP.

Tools and templates were also shared with the MDRO from the Embassy in Mbabane, Swaziland to help her get started on that Post's MDRP.



DASP Staff Development & Training

- Gary Barrett and Chris Leonardo completed Humanitarian Protection Training (November 14-15).
- Laura Chapman, Scott Hocklander, and Chris Leonardo completed Grants Refresher Training (December 5).
- All DASP employees completed on-line *No Fear Act* training and *New Employee Ethics Orientation*.
- Stephanie Savolaine completed CBRNE Awareness and Security Overseas training (October 30 and November 1).
- All DASP employees completed annual performance reviews (October 2006).

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